



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

2 MARCH 2021

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) Los Angeles – Police Investigating Fire, Vandalism at Japanese Buddhist Temple

(U) Authorities are investigating a fire and vandalism at a Buddhist temple in the Little Tokyo section of Los Angeles. Surveillance video caught a man jumping the security fences at the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple on Thursday night, smashing a 12-foot-high glass window with a rock, yanking a pair of metallic lanterns off their concrete bases and lighting two wooden lantern stands on fire. A Los Angeles Police Department spokesperson said it was too early to label Thursday's vandalism a hate crime because the investigation is in the early stages.

SOURCE: 27 February 2021, [Associated Press](#)

(U) San Jose – 13 Alleged Gang Members Arrested in String of Violent Robberies in Santa Clara County

(U) Thirteen alleged gang members suspected in a string of crimes throughout Santa Clara County, including attempted murder and armed robberies that targeted gardeners, were arrested during a weeklong effort by several law enforcement agencies, authorities said yesterday. Detectives who executed search warrants at several homes found multiple firearms, gang paraphernalia, drugs, and dozens of stolen items. The gang targeted local gardeners and landscapers while the victims were away from their vehicles. But some thefts of their equipment became robberies when the suspects used force or brandished weapons prior to fleeing the scene.

SOURCE: 1 March 2021, [Associated Press](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) Alabama – 20 Arrested in Human Trafficking Operation

(U) Tuscaloosa – Investigators with the West Alabama Human Trafficking Task Force made 20 arrests during an undercover operation in Tuscaloosa last week. Investigators said the operation was designed to help stop the illegal purchase of sex in West Alabama. The West Alabama Human Trafficking Task Force is made up of officers with Tuscaloosa Police Department, The Northport Police Department, The University of Alabama Police Department, the Tuscaloosa County Sheriff's Office along with members of Trafficking Hope, a victim services provider. Agents with DHS Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) also assisted in the detail.

SOURCE: 1 March 2021, [WBRC](#)

(U) Connecticut – Man Arrested for Tossing Molotov Cocktails at EMS Facilities

(U) Old Saybrook – A Connecticut emergency Medical Technician wanted in connection with four Molotov cocktail attacks across the state was arrested after fleeing to Pennsylvania, authorities said Sunday. Richard White, 37, was charged with arson and burglary, according to a statement by the Old Saybrook Fire Department. The bombings were traced back to a "physical altercation" White had "with another employee" at Hunter's Ambulance in Meriden, Connecticut, police said. The dispute arose from "a disciplinary hearing that resulted in White being placed on administrative leave." White allegedly "ignited a makeshift Molotov cocktail inside of the employee room" at Hunter's Ambulance in Old Saybrook before fleeing.

SOURCE: 1 March 2021, [NBC News](#)

UNCLASSIFIED

(U) Florida – New York Crime Family Leader Arrested on Conspiracy Charges

(U) Fort Lauderdale – Peter G. Gerace Jr., 53, an alleged New York crime family leader was arrested Sunday by federal agents in Fort Lauderdale on drug-related conspiracy charges. Gerace Jr., a nephew of reputed Buffalo mob boss Joseph A. Todaro Jr., was taken into custody by DHS HSI agents and was scheduled for his first appearance in federal court on Monday before his expected transfer to New York. Gerace is among six men targeted by federal prosecutors who have called the group the “Italian Organized Crime” family of Western New York. Prosecutors identified the Gerace brothers as co-conspirators of Joseph Bongiovanni, a retired DEA agent who was arrested in 2019 on charges of accepting \$250,000 in bribes to help drug dealers avoid arrest, including some the government says are connected to organized crime.

SOURCE: 1 March 2021, [Miami Herald](#)

(U) Pennsylvania – Passwords, Posts Exposed in Hack of Gab Social Media Platform

(U) Clarks Summit – Right-wing social media network Gab appears to have suffered an extensive data breach. A self-proclaimed hacktivist who goes by the handle “JaXpArO” obtained more than 70GB of data on the platform’s users through a SQL injection vulnerability. The dataset includes approximately 40 million posts from more than 15,000 Gab users. JaXpArO shared the trove with Distributed Denial of Secrets (DDoSecrets), a WikiLeaks-like advocacy group that plans to selectively share the database with journalists and researchers.

SOURCE: 1 March 2021, [Engadget](#)

(U) Virginia – Police Officer Fatally Shot During Traffic Stop

(U) Stanley – A police officer in Stanley was shot and killed by a driver during a traffic stop before he could get out of his patrol vehicle, authorities said. Officer Dominic J. Winum, 48, was fatally shot in the town Friday afternoon, Stanley Police Chief Ryan Dean said in a statement. Winum was shot by Dakota G. Richards, 29, before he could get out of his patrol vehicle. He was later pronounced dead at the scene. Virginia State Police said Richards ran away but was later found hiding in a barn. The suspect reportedly made a “threatening movement” and was shot and killed by officers.

SOURCE: 27 February 2021, [NBC 4 Washington](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) Nigeria – 279 Kidnapped Schoolgirls Freed

(U) Gusau – Hundreds of Nigerian girls abducted last week from a boarding school in the country’s northwest have been released, a state governor said today, ending the latest in a spate of such kidnappings in the West African nation. Zamfara Governor Bello Matawalle said that 279 girls had been freed after being abducted from the Government Girls Junior Secondary School in Jangebe Town on Friday. Officials said “bandits” were behind the abduction, referring to the groups of armed men who operate in Zamfara state and kidnap for money or to push for the release of their members from jail.

SOURCE: 2 March 2021, [Associated Press](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

(U) FOR QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE EMAIL STAC@CALOES.CA.GOV, OR CALL 916-636-2900.

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